

THE SPECIFICATION

The following amendment to the specification is intended to correct the above drawing objection cited in the Office Action. Applicant believes that the new text provides clarity without adding any new matter. Applicant believes that one skilled in the art would realize that when the specification identifies a set of supplier tiers and labels them 130.1, 130.2 through 130.N, that “130” would refer to the sets of supplier tiers as a group as is illustrated in figure 1.

Please replace the paragraph at page 16, line 7 with the following replacement paragraph that is marked up to show the changes made.

A system 100 includes a hub 110, a set of first tier supplier facilities 130.1, a set of second tier supplier facilities 130.2, a set of Nth tier supplier facilities 130.N, where N is an integer greater than zero and 130.N represents that Nth tier supplier, and at least one OEM or other manufacturing facility 150. The multiple sets of tier supplier facilities (ie. 130.1 – 130.N) are collectively illustrated as system element 130 in figure 1. Communication between the hub 110 and the set of first tier supplier facilities 130.1, later tier supplier facilities 130.N, and OEM or other manufacturing facility 150 is conducted by way of a communications network 160 (not shown).